

662

ALLEN COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY



3 1833 03097 9170

Gc 929.2 Es835ka
Keyser, Isaac Newton.
The Esterly pioneers and
their contemporaries



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2018

<https://archive.org/details/esterlypioneerst00keys>

THE ESTERLY PIONEERS

AND

... THEIR CONTEMPORARIES ...



I. N. KEYSER

*Written in 1931 by Isaac Newton Keyser
Published in 1937 by his wife Mary Allen Keyser
in loving and reverent memory and
Presented to the Michael Esterly Memorial Association
Columbiana, Ohio*

●

Allen County Public Library
900 Webster Street
PO Box 2270
Fort Wayne, IN 46801-2270

The ESTERLY Pioneers and Their Contemporaries

INTRODUCTION



STORIES of Pioneers and Pioneering recounted in the annals of abounding life struggling for foothold in the formative period of our State, find keenest appreciation among the descendents of those whose forebears they immortalize as First Settlers.

Within the limits of this theme, it is possible here to record the transformation of original entries that were, and a part that still is, Esterly land.

The high esteem in which our first Family held their neighbors and in turn were themselves so held and the better perspective of their joint contribution to their community, state and nation, are given as the determining reasons why there is added to the Esterly Pioneers a chapter devoted to their contemporaries. Furthermore, the full credit which our German family deserved through long reciprocal relations with the founders of Columbiana and the township about did not receive due mention in English written records or in tradition.

For the few recorded facts, some traditions and inferences touching the Esterly Family previous to its migration, readers are referred to the 'Brief Narrative' introducing our Genealogical Tables.

ESTERLY PIONEERS



MICHAEL and Catherine Esterly, 1762 - 1831 and 1766 - 1821—is the chronological epitome of their place in history, dates of birth and span of life. They were born in the Duchy of Wurttemberg, as its title stood at the time of their emigration, 1804.

The family name, Esterly, is deserving of greater attention than can be given in this connection. It has as its etymological basis the word 'oester,' signifying 'of the East or from the East,' and it stands out plainly in 'Oesterreich,' and in the German word meaning 'east,' and in the German word for Easter, a Festival of the East. It is not a name therefore derived from a profession or trade or menial service. It survives twenty centuries of Teuton race struggles along the ancient Baltic shores of Pro-Russia and the Valley of the Danube where fierce tribes of Teuton kindred irresistibly marched to the final destruction of the Roman Empire.

The likelier German spelling is Oesterle, and its pronounciation, Asterla, the beginning and ending vowels sounded as 'ei' in eight. In a later chapter is noted the difficulty of equalling German vowels by the use of English Orthoepey in such exacting matters as Letters Patent to 'Michael Easterly.'

Our grandsire was a typical Teuton. He transmitted Teuton characteristics that are enduring in the present generation. The strong physical inheritance and personality of this man are preserved to us in father-to-son accounts. He was of average proportions, dark of complexion, had black hair dark blue eyes, and strong character indication of ear and mouth. In matters of personality he was doubly Germanic. He was resolute, austere, self-contained and laconic, but given to no traits of covetousness or churlish dishonor. In whatever he did he was deliberate and methodical. He enjoyed good humor and social converse with those who spoke his language and with many of his

The ESTERLY Pioneers and Their Contemporaries

contemporaries through competent, socially inclined interpreters. The Teuton heart within him relaxed more and more as he comprehended the spirit of democracy and tolerance and fidelity that was manifest in the land of his adoption.

I here depart from my subject for the moment to explain the omission of the family name Bogner in my circular letter soliciting data for our Genealogical Tables. When my manuscript was ready for publication, I consulted the three remaining grand daughters of Michael Esterly in regard to the family name of Catherine his wife. It seemed well fixed in my own mind that she was born Bogner, but two of these sisters asserted the name was Bohlender.

This lack of agreement necessitated the omission of any family name. However there was full agreement that Catherine was a foster child adopted into a family of good standing and possessed of considerable means from which she received helpful patrimony.

Another matter: The family of Jacob Esterly places Michael Esterly Junior as the oldest son. Our Tables rank him in order following the daughter Catherine. The Muntz Letter, written by an eye-witness of the tragedy of his drowning, says he was about ten years of age. Had he been ten years old in 1804, his birth year had been 1794, four years after the birth year of George, and two years after that of Jacob Esterly. Evident plausibility placed him next in order to the daughter Catherine, born in 1795. The Esterly sisters insist that he was a mere child and add that he was drowned within plain sight of his mother powerless to save him. The horror and continued anguish of that scene were ever present in the remaining years of Catherine Esterly's life.

Our family retains a copy of a letter written by a son of John George Muntz to his father's friend whose name was Wilhelm. This letter has been preserved for many years. For purposes of comparison and critical examination it is here introduced.

THE MUNTZ LETTER

John George Muntz left Hentensbach with his family on the first day of April, 1804, and proceeding to Heilbron took passage in a boat on the river Neckar thence by way of Mannheim and the Rhine to Amsterdam in Holland, where he embarked with three hundred others in the good American ship Aurora, Captain Boules, about the first of May, paying three hundred and forty-three dollars for passage for himself and family. After a tolerably prosperous journey they arrived in Baltimore, Maryland, on the fourth of July following. After a stay of three weeks at Baltimore, he in company with other families who had left Germany under similar circumstances with himself and came in the same ship, the Aurora, started for Pittsburgh where they arrived after a tedious journey of three weeks, paying at the rate of six dollars per hundred pounds for freight. There was then neither turnpike road, canal nor railroad between Pittsburgh and the Atlantic cities at that time. There was a shipyard at the mouth of Sooks run, near where the Pittsburgh Gas Works are now standing and in the shops and sheds of this yard our German immigrants were lodged for about two weeks. While there, the writer of this in company with several of his comrade boys of about ten years old went into the river to

The ESTERLY Pioneers and Their Contemporaries

bathe and one of them, called Michael Esterly, was drowned. He was buried the next day in the cemetery of the little German church which stood at the corner of Sixth and Smithfield streets, but the funeral procession had no occasion to follow the streets; it went directly across Scotch Hill and around the foot of Hogs Pond to the church, as all the intervening ground appeared to be out as commons.

From Pittsburgh, our family went down the Ohio river in a common ferry flat to Beaver point, or as it was then called, Ft. Mackintosh (McIntosh), thence to Columbiana, Ohio, where Father John George Muntz entered a quarter section of Congress land jointly with his friend, Michael Esterly, and built a cabin on it, but before it was quite finished he was induced by the somewhat notorious George Rapp to leave Columbiana and join the settlement which that leader of Separatists and his adherents were about forming on Connoquenessing Creek in Butler County, Pennsylvania."

In confirming the mention of Hentensbach in the above letter, I sought through the Bureau of the city of Heilbron, on Neckar, Wurttemberg, the civil district or Overampt, in which Hentensbach is situated. The answer to my enquiries came promptly and courteously: "Hentensbach is a little village about 8 kilometers from the town Bachnang in the Overampt of Bachnang." This agrees very well with family traditions that they lived not far from Stuttgart.

Now by connecting the tradition that our Family lived within easy distance of Stuttgart, with the clear cut assertion that John George Muntz left Hentensbach (not far from Stuttgart) for Heilbron, and joining the two to the further assertion that from Pittsburgh the family went to Columbiana, Ohio, where "my father John George Muntz entered a quarter section of land jointly with his friend Michael Esterly," we construct a strong case that these two men and their families were close neighbors in the Overampt of Bachnang in the vicinity of Hentensbach; and the log of the Muntz family is the log of ours. The further evidence that our "German immigrants were lodged" . . . in the shops and sheds of a ship yard in Pittsburgh and the account of the drowning of little Michael, a comrade boy, was family tradition before the Muntz letter was known to us.

After the arrival of these families at the port of Baltimore, July 4, 1804, they remained in that city three weeks. There is no tradition of the route they took to Pittsburgh, but inasmuch as the only freight road in operation between the two towns was the old military road followed by Braddock and the commander of the army of 14,000 men that put down the Whisky Insurrection in 1794 at Pittsburgh, center of that defiant uprising against Constitutional supremacy of federal over state laws in matters of internal revenue, it is evident that they followed the Hagerstown, Carlisle and Monongahela-Portage road after leaving Hagerstown. For some reason the village of Hagerstown left a favorable impression on our family. The name recurs often in the John Esterly branch.

The Esterly and Muntz families, with an indefinite number of other immigrants, journeyed together to Pittsburgh, arriving there the last week of August. How long they halted here is not known. There was need of time to rest, to consult Leader-Pastor Rapp's plans for the Harmony Society he was

The ESTERLY Pioneers and Their Contemporaries

organizing and to reflect on Rapp's offer of trial of this communistic venture, which in the end Michael declined. There was pressing work on hand in getting teams and wagons, provisions, clothing, and, do not forget—implements and tools,—to meet the emergencies of a dreaded winter, whose approaching signs would be due in a few weeks. Of the 720 persons that constituted Rapp's party, few indeed had the courage to challenge the hardships and dangers of those Beaver Valley forests, denser than their native Schwartz Wald, and even more nearly pathless. In this decisive hour, the courage of our grandsire, racked by the death of his name-sake son and the anguish of Wife Catherine, rose to transcendent height as he chose the alternative of pioneer hardships instead of Communal Society life.

The first leg of the remaining distance they covered is faithfully told in the Muntz letter. From Fort McIntosh they took an ancient Indian Trail that divided about four or five miles north-west of this abandoned post, and then followed the well known and well mapped upper trail which Colonel Bouquet followed on his punitive expedition against the Tuscarora and Coshocton Indian tribes in 1764 (See Howe's Recollections of Ohio). On the sixth night's encampment after leaving Pittsburgh, he posted his forces not far from the village of Rogers on a commanding bluff on the Middle Fork of the Little Beaver, now known as Camp Bouquet.

It is gratifying to find in Mr. Aaron Esterly's accounts the guide lines that complete our Family's travels in search of religious and political freedom. He says: "East Fairfield was the first village or settlement through which our Family passed after entering Ohio."

The remaining distance of seven miles to Joshua Dixon's cabin, was tortuous but unexpected assistance and hearty welcome came when our Family reached Middleton settlement and were there directed to an influential German, to the new town site of Columbiana and the hospitality of its founder. The date of their arrival, as indicated by the first land entry, was early September, 1804.

The records of the General Land office, Washington, D. C., as they pertain to our entries, are given to complete the details of transactions and probable date of our arrival in Ohio:

S. E. $\frac{1}{4}$ Sec. 5, Entered Sept. 14, 1804, by Michael Esterly. Last payment Aug. 18, 1805. Patented October 1, 1806.

W. $\frac{1}{2}$ Sec. 5, Entered Sept. 14, 1804. Last payment 1808. Patented 1806.

S. E. $\frac{1}{4}$ Sec. 2, Tp. 16 R111, Entered Feb. 2, 1805.

W. $\frac{1}{2}$ Sec. 2, Entered by Michael Coxens Jan. 3, 1805, assigned to John Michael Esterly 12/8, 1808, Patented Feb. 2, 1810.

The total area of these four tracts was 960 acres. The Patenting of S. E. $\frac{1}{4}$ Sec. 2, Tp. 16 and R 111, under the title of Michael Esterly, and the patenting of the West $\frac{1}{2}$ of the same section under the title of John Michael Esterly, is an anomaly of fading interest.

The ESTERLY Pioneers and Their Contemporaries

The question has often been raised but not answered as to how Michael Esterly converted his Wurttemberg coin into the values of the numerous foreign coins in circulation in 1804. It is the writer's opinion that Rapp's capable agent, Frederick Reichert, exchanged all moneys belonging to Rapp's party at Amsterdam. Dutch coins were then accepted in the States in preference to all others. The inconvenience of getting credit into the Steubenville Land office gave our resourceful Michael small concern, and so no tradition touched upon it.

When Michael Esterly declined George Rapp's offer that he make trial of Harmony Society before signing contracts, he had already learned that Rapp had seriously considered the purchase of a large tract of land on the headwaters of Little Beaver, of which Cherry Fork was a tributary. But instead, Rapp purchased land along the hills of Connoquenessing Creek for purposes of vine culture.

It must not be stated as a fact that Rapp and his scouts met Mathias Lower on their inspection tour in 1803, but subsequent transactions and some brief records touching Rapp's investigations warrant strong belief that these men met Lower then and later directed our Family to his cabin. The writer holds strongly to this belief. At East Fairfield enquiries were made as best they could be for German Lowers, and at Middleton, William Heald and his settlement directed Michael thither on the mere mention of neighbor Lower's name. Imagination pictures for us his satisfied features when he met in the solitude of these woods one who spoke his kindred language. Three or four miles beyond this brief stopping place, his teams rested at the cabin of Joshua Dixon with his family of wife and eleven children, at the very end of Fort McIntosh Trace. A small clearing, the work of two years, had been made on the highest point of a gentle slope, now Main Street in Columbiana, Ohio.

The month of August, 1804, is now well gone and Michael must attend to the business of selecting the kind of land that will respond to Wurttemberg's cultivation. Only conjecture can fill the next few weeks.


Michael Esterly had now met William Heald, Mathias Lower and Joshua Dixon. Mutual friendship followed them in many years of mutual helpfulness.

Let the teams rest; let the children play near the covered wagons for a week and let their mother bethink herself of the new surroundings while the Family Head is directed by Joshua Dixon over the fine tract of Section No. 5, and concludes to make application for entry of it. William Heald surveyed it and no doubt transacted the business of entering it for Michael Esterly.

On Sept. 4, 1804, the first payments are made and acknowledged. Neighbor Lower gives honest assurance that all is well. The next move goes forward to Cherry Fork and our Cabin Site.

The ESTERLY Pioneers and Their Contemporaries

ORGANIZATION OF COLUMBIANA COUNTY

N June 14, 1803, two of the associated Justices of our State Supreme Court, Samuel Huntington and William Spriggs, had come to Mathias Lower's cabin and announced that they were authorized to organize the newly created County of Columbiana into subdivisions and furthermore asked that this first court within its limits might be held in Lower's barn.


The northern boundary of the original County was the southern limit of Connecticut or Western Reserve. Its western boundary reached far into Stark County. The remaining limits were Pennsylvania on the East and the Ohio River on the South.

This court divided the county tentatively into five townships: Springfield, Middleton, Salem, Fairfield and St. Clair. The latter was named in honor of the autocratic General St. Clair, unfortunate friend of Washington. The name of Jefferson then became ascendant and that of St. Clair rapidly vanished from maps of Ohio. The other townships were named by Surveyor Heald and our County Commissioners. In 1846, Mahoning County was given nearly a full tier of our upper townships.

Inasmuch as no general election had been held in Ohio in June 1803, it was necessary for the Court to appoint officers for townships and a Board of County Commissioners and Land Surveyor until popular vote could elect their successors. We are concerned to know that Wm. Heald received the appointment for Surveyorship. Soon he was elected for a long-time service. Heald threaded the wooded hills and tanglewood valleys with the lines of his Jacob's Staff and compass box with its stalled sights, until he had recorded the surveys of a great part of our County lying north of the original east and west line of the first seven ranges. Heald, like other pioneers who came before the organization of Ohio, held his claims by "blazing" under "Squatter Rights."

No doubt this statement will be challenged, but the facts are that while considerable tracts of public land were sold under land warrants, or pre-emptions within the First Seven Ranges, there is no record that pre-emptions were issued for the townships north of this tract. In fact, surveys under federal direction were not continued after 1786, until 1796, and not finished until 1810, after the organization of Ohio. The surveys of Section, Half and Quarter Section lines were completed mostly by William Heald. In 1850, he moved to Cedar County, Iowa, and in 1867 died there at the age of 101 years.

Pioneer Contemporaries of Michael and Catherine Esterly

ARCHING the several pioneer histories of Columbiana County, we are amazed at the meagreness of their accounts and their lack of vital continuity. In County annals there is scant mention of living pioneers, yet in the arduous task of laying bare the soil for provident use, in their courageous persistence in fixing habitation, in their high character, in family direction and devotion, their works do follow them.

Unarticulated and subsidized biographies, for the most part, supplant the worthy and abounding life history of our County, a rich source book of knowledge concerning the momentous moral and political trends of the 19th century.

EARLIEST PIONEERS OF RECORD



NICHOLAS Firestone, third of the name in this country, moved to the west from Pennsylvania, bringing his family in a wagon train. The time was about 1797. He went into the forest with his ax, cleared the land and built a cabin on a tract later described as Section No. 1, Township No. 12 and Range 2. Afterward, when Thomas Jefferson was President, he ceded this land to the first of the Ohio Firestones, a tract of 640 acres. "Where the family took root it still endures."

Nicholas Firestone and his son Peter built here a commodious and durable brick house whose architecture still reveals the character of builder and building. These vigorous pioneers reared through their descendants a man who wrote his family name into the languages of the world.

Some years ago, Harvey S. Firestone reunited the severally owned tracts of his great-grandsire into a single model farm, retained the fine old manor house and breathed into it the hospitality which for generations marked the Firestone Homestead.

There is one remarkable date that may not be controverted and which reaches back into the 18th century. Its inscription and unusual place of preservation have no parallel in our local history.

"Her J. Rogers kild a Ber 1797." This tragic brief was cut into the back of a beech tree standing at the head of a little gully two or three miles north-east of the farm now owned by Harvey S. Firestone. About 100 yards away, there was evidence in the younger growth of timber that a clearing had been made in the original forest within whose limits the squatter's cabin stood. It was from its shelter, let us surmise, that the civilizing influence of his rifle passed into the bear.

On a perfect June Sunday in the early '80's, the late Levi Hisey, then a man of seventy-five years, invited the writer to accompany him to visit what he termed the most interesting monument of our pioneer history. Mr. Hisey said that when he first came across this inscription, the date 1797 was plain, but in a long interim the last figure "7" had lost its identity.

Frequently the name Rogers appears in our County records, and the present village bearing this name, near Camp Bouquet, has no doubt living relation to J. Rogers, 1797, whose name leads all the rest in uniqueness and definiteness of family record.

The families of Joshua Dixon and his son-in-law Benjamin Hanna, settled here in 1802. Families about East Fairfield and Middleton settlement, came as early as 1801. The names following are listed without reference to individual priority of coming: John Aultman, John Boulton, John Cope, John, Joseph and Isaac Croger, Joseph Critchett, Henry Dixon, and the Farrel families, William Heald, and Mathias Lower. These names mostly indicate English origin. With few exceptions, the families were Virginia Quakers, and with them Michael Esterly was one at heart in Quietist worship and unostentatious living. The Ephraim Holloway family came to our neighborhood about the time of the Middleton settlement, and settled in the very southeast corner of Salem Township. A son of this family married a daughter of Joshua Dixon, and later his daughter married a son of Jacob Esterly. (7)

The ESTERLY Pioneers and Their Contemporaries

Michael Coxens came to Dixon's settlement in 1804. The contemporary families that became related to ours through marriage and emigrated from Wurttemberg with Michael Esterly, were those of Christopher Renkenberger, whose son married Michael's daughter Catherine,Hefele, whose daughter married Michael's son George,.....Muchenfoos, whose daughter married Michael's son Jacob, and.....Rukenbrod whose son married Michael's daughter Anna Maria.

The Bogner family settled in Springfield Township. William Gilbert was also an early comer. His land bordered our Cherry Fork entry on the west. His son Jacob married Barbara Renkenberger.

'Neighbor' Robison settled in the section south of ours on adjoining land, and the Roller family near Washingtonville.

Ganor Pierce, about 1808, a most needed and helpful man, began to practice the art of Tubal Cain, and wrought in iron. His smithy stood near the south east corner of Joshua Dixon's public square.

To these are added families who refused or left Rapp's Society: the Glecklers, Zeiglers, Crumbachers, probably Peter and Christopher Hively, who settled in the north east quarter of Section No. 5, along Mill Creek, and 'Father' Reiff. Later contemporaries were the Strohakers, whose son married the oldest daughter of J. Jonathen Rukenbrod, and the Favingers, Mellingers, Fredericks, Nolds, Matzenbach and Scoggins families.

There remains a persistent tradition that a brother of Michael Esterly came with him from Wurttemberg, but diligent search for records of him fail to verify it.

Standing at the junction of two pioneer trails, our pioneer hamlet, named Columbia in Jefferson's parchment deed to our family, will long be remembered as the first gateway to the Territory Northwest of the River Ohio.

Let the student who seeks to understand Ohio, first of all come to a realization of the fact that in the prohibition of slavery from this territory, the Ordinance of 1787 became the agency for the selection of the people who were ultimately to settle this vast land, and, earliest of all, our own State.

This prohibition was an emphatic exclusion of the slave holder, but it was an equally emphatic invitation to all those, whether of North or South, who opposed slavery. In reality, the far-flung opponents of human slavery from the South, joining the hosts of anti-slavery forces in the North, made of this Northwest Territory the keystone that maintains the cardinal balance of our States.

The ESTERLY Pioneers and Their Contemporaries

JOURNEY'S END

THE CABIN AND ITS ENVIRONMENTS

WHEN our teams were halted at the site selected for the cabin and our Family assembled at the close of that memorable mid-September day, Michael Esterly read aloud by the aid of camp fires an appropriate chapter from Hebrew prophet and a lesson from the Gospels setting forth the promise of eternal life. A brief prayer for protection and spiritual guidance closed the day.

The site chosen for the Cabin was about 150 yards, more or less, east of the present intersection of the pioneer road and Cherry Fork, and on the north side of it. The Cabin was a one room structure about 20 feet long and 14 feet wide, typical of pioneer days in all respects. It is very likely that John George Muntz assisted Michael Esterly in building it before he rejoined the "somewhat notorious George Rapp." The cabin long years after was torn down and rebuilt on the farm that became the property of my parents about 1860, where it served as workshop and wood house until the late eighties of that century.

When the little outpost of civilization was finished it sheltered our household heads and four children, George 14 years old, Jacob 12, Catherine 9, and infant son John, just past his first birth year. Good workmanship and ideal timber rendered it defiant of winter inclemencies; true in very stormy periods of this season, a generous circulation of air we call drafts and coverings of snow over the puncheon floor, even over Wurttemberger blankets brought occasional complaint to Catherine from George and Jacob as they hurried to the open hearth down the outside ladder which led to their thick pallets of dried reeds and long swamp grass. Our sympathies would go out to these youngsters were it not that they retold their experience in this primitive attic shelter again and again in later years with much glee. Why extend sympathy when indeed the very conditions under which they regaled each day's toil with dreamless sleep gave them octogenarian life blood and stamina?

Behold now our Cabin late December 1804! Up the wide-throated chimney races the blue healing smoke of distilled hickory wood, and down the chimney come at times little fitful counter currents of creosoted vapor which are wafted over our family as by the benediction of Hygeia herself!

Here within the great Northwest Territory is dedicated a new altar to the Most High God and a new generation is reared under the uncompromising faith of our Family Head, Michael Esterly.

Arrival was too late to make sowings for the year 1804, but of certain food supplies there was great abundance. The carcass of an hundred and fifty pound deer could be purchased for fifty cents. There was a wealth of water fowl and brook trout and burdens of nuts to supplement what could be purchased in the way of food and feed from the Middleton settlers. Pioneer families did not depend on wheat. Corn grew wherever the ground could be cleared for sunshine, and by simple process hominy became the staff of pioneer life.

Our horses foraged in milder seasons but in severity of winter took to the shelter of their kralls. These pens were of sapling poles covered with flat stacks of rough bottom grass and reeds and branches of trees which afforded protection overhead and wind break on two sides.

There was work to warm outdoor labor of father and sons, household cares within for mother and 9-year-old daughter Catherine, nurse and guide to infant John.

The ESTERLY Pioneers and Their Contemporaries

Our forebears were reared in the school of adversity, which made self-reliance a necessity; but here in the boundless forest of stubbornly rooted trees, their self-reliance, while a noble expression, no doubt quailed at times at the obstacles before it. In contemplating the solidarity of his forest expanse Michael Esterly, it may be observed, must have spoken in this wise: "We've got to have a patch of clear ground ready for April corn planting and our Trace must be opened to Dixon's road."

The resolute character of this man reaches to superb heights. He is 43 years of age and now past the meridian of his strength. It's now or never, grandsire! It's now—or soon you'll be forced to rejoin friend John George Muntz and the Harmonische Gesellschaft where irrational preachings and unnatural family relations await you. Pastor Rapp will soon terrify his credulous followers into submission by revealing his vision of the Second Advent of the Messiah, and will swallow up in an un-American ill-starred Commune their lifetime earnings and the patrimony which Wife Catherine entrusted to you!

The winter of 1804 - 1805 heard the echoing ax beating down the stout trees about our cabin. Oncoming deserters from Rapp's Commune gave assistance. Eastward along our wagon trace the mighty force of well directed fire burned day and night, and so when April showers searched the ancient woods they fell propitiously upon our clearing, and the Sign of the Rain beheld new prospects for growing flocks.

There is no record of the acreage cleared during Michael's life. A considerable area of forest land remained in his original purchase to the time of his death 1843, and was left standing on the north side of the half section line running east and west. In the extreme south eastern corner of the entry Jacob Esterly retained to the end of his life a beautiful woodland grove which was maintained as a sugar grove and as a gathering place for public meetings in season. This Esterly Grove was the Forum on which the Union sentiment was sustained in spite of great national adversity through the years of the Rebellion. Here for a quarter of a century after the battle of Appomattox the moral and political issues of the nation were discussed. This landmark disappeared in 1890.

ESTERLY PIONEERS HOME AND COMMUNITY LIFE



VERY little matter has come down to us to illuminate the home life of our Family in the decade following 1804. Family records show that Anna Maria, last of Michael's children, was born here in 1807.

The question arises, Were Michael's children schooled? In German or English, or not at all? The older sons and Catherine brought with them some elementary tuition in German. There is tradition that German tutors floated among our pioneers, and if so, these children were no doubt among their pupils. Not until 1815 was there such a thing as a community school maintained by subscription. It stood where Grace Reformed Church of Columbiana now stands, and to its building Michael Esterly was a contributor in money, produce, and labor of men and teams. Son John and Anna Maria probably attended school terms here. Instruction no doubt was carried on in the English language. It must have been an inspiration to 12-year-old John and 8-year-old Anna to break into this group of young Americans. Public schools were not organized in Fairfield Tp. until the compulsory legislation of 1831 required them. The year 1832 opened the door of Cherry Fork School cabin.

The ESTERLY Pioneers and Their Contemporaries

The development of Public Schools belongs to the generation of Michael's grandchildren.

"Was there a doctor in Dixonville?" asks a solicitous descendant. No, madam, there wasn't even an ubiquitous "Doc." There was, however, an abundance of unvitiated air, plenty to eat, plenty to drink and plenty to sleep. The art of midwifery was successfully practiced as far back as our accounts go and as far forward as the inconspicuous date of August 4, 1857.

Study of our Genealogical Tables shows a very low mortality rate. There is no indication of dread epidemics among children until they were boxed up in oxygen-proof school buildings. With one exception, the five branches of Michael Esterly's family were served by excellent spring water. The spring on Jacob Esterly's farm had few rivals. The exception was that of J. Jonathan Rukenbrod, which fluctuated with the summer rains and its level was but a few feet above the water of Mill Creek.

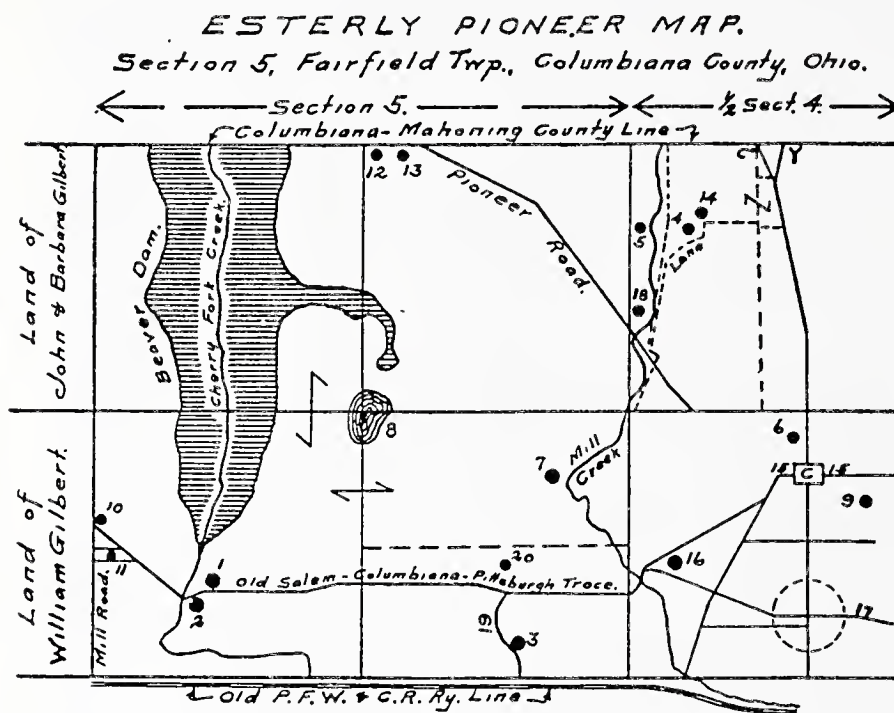
The period from 1804 to 1808 marked severe hardship and tedious isolation for our Family. Pioneer isolation began to disappear when Dixon's new town site of Columbiana with 58 well situated town lots attracted settlers. Within 5 years of our Family's arrival, a post office was opened receiving mail from East Fairfield office by post rider and a little later by stage coach. A shorter route to Pittsburgh which reached the grist mill at Beaver Falls in a day's horseback journey, gave life to the community. Michael Coxen(?) opened a log tavern in the southwest angle of Dixon's public square, the site of which has been used continuously since that date for public accommodation. One of the very helpful men in the early history of our village was one Ganor Pierce, blacksmith, whose forge stood somewhat back in the northeast angle of the square. One can imagine few greater hardships to pioneer life than the absence of an iron smith. The name of Ganor Pierce deserves fitting mention among our early settlers. Merchants long awaited the opening of the old Pittsburgh-Columbiana road before stores of any kind were started. The first mention I find of such business ventures dates to 1812, when Benjamin Hanna, son-in-law of Joshua Dixon, opened the first semblance of a store in Columbiana. After this date, grist mills, sawmills and carding mills began to relieve the slow tedium of building and weaving woolen cloth.

The labor incident to grading for railroad tracks brought Irish immigrants to our very door. There were many collisions among these themselves and fellow workmen English or Pennsylvania Dutch. Strange swear words terrified young Esterlys and brawls were common. A few Irish families took up permanent residence and Protestantism and Catholicism met for the first time in Section No. 5, each satisfied with the other under the guarantees of the Ordinance of 1787.

The actual work of surveying our claims was done by William Heald. Mr. Aaron Esterly is in possession of a typographic map well delineated and with a description of a marsh known as Beaver Dam, bearing Heald's signature and accompanying his plat of Michael Esterly's entry in Section 5. At the southeast corner of this Section (See Map) stood for many years a stout post deeply set in the earth. Four trees standing nearest this post, one south east, one south west, one north east, one north west of this monument were seared with branding irons.

The tree standing in the north west angle made by intersection of two full section lines bore the cryptic symbols R2 Tp. 12 Sec. 5. Joshua Dixon. Our pioneers used these guides to great advantage. Frequently they began their clearings but a short distance from them for section lines carried the expectancy of public roads and their crossings promised better facilities in transportation.

The ESTERLY Pioneers and Their Contemporaries



LEGEND.

- | | |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| #1 Cabin Site. | #14. Joseph & Maria Esterly-Keyser. |
| #2 Manor House. | #15 Cross Street. |
| #3 Jacob Esterly. | #16 Newton Dixon. |
| #4 Catherine Scoggins. | #17 Old Fort McIntosh Trace. |
| #5 Rev. Manesmith. | #18 Hively's Mill. |
| #6 Joshua Dixon's Cabin. | #19 Columbiana-Leetonia Highway. |
| #7 J. J. Rukenbrod. | #20 David & Catherine Strahaker. |
| #8 Huckelberry Swamp. | C Columbiana Public Square. |
| #9 William Hanna Cabin. | C' Canfield Highway. |
| #10 S. J. Esterly. | Y Youngstown Highway. |
| #11 Esterly Burial Ground. | #13 John Esterly. (1855) |
| #12 Isaac Anglemayer. | |
| #13 George Renkenberger. | |

The ESTERLY Pioneers and Their Contemporaries

It should be stated here that the letters patent issued under the signature of the President constitute the best of warranty deeds, for the National Government guaranteed their validity and defended them in all suits at law.

Michael Esterly had reached a goodly land. In addition to guarantees of the Federal Government, the Ordinance of 1787 added its generous support of public education, free men and freedom of worship. If our Family elected to kneel in cabin instead of cathedral it had the best guarantee of the States in the Union and the best guarantee among the nations of the earth, so to do. In no other state of the Union was the sound of running history so clear and inviting as in Ohio, oldest of the five states carved out of the Territory Northwest of the River Ohio.

The gradual settlement of Salem and some villages west of it brought immigrants past our cabin and some information of the outside world. German immigrants came seeking work and certainly got their fill. German newspapers came along a year or two after the establishment of our post office in 1809. Few books there were in those days. A copy of the Bible, a book of short sermons and hymn books about completed the list. Our Family was devout. There was prayer at meal time by the Head of the family and by the children. One of the prayers for juveniles came into use in my parents' home. Michael Esterly was as thoroughly undenominational in worship as any Quietist. There was no tradition that he ever attended other than the house to house meetings begun at Wurttemberg. Our forebears were schooled in frugality, industry and patience, but were seriously lacking in enterprise and ambition. As Quietists in faith and practice, they became passive in a period of marvellous activity. Nevertheless they had their recompense. They sought here a religious shrine rather than wealth and power.

Let it be understood that our Family Head had no grievance to offer to the primitive church organizations as he found them. What he thought about future possibilities in church domination gave him no concern under the covenant of the Ordinance of 1787. I seem to recall from hear-say that his daughter Anna Maria joined the communion of the German Reformed Church. The others held with their father. His grandchildren, with few exceptions, became members of regularly established Protestant churches. The oldest of these, Catherine, daughter of George Esterly and wife of Daniel Miller, became a member of the Methodist Church early in life.

Mr. Aaron Esterly, who lived close to his grandfather Jacob Esterly, says Michael Esterly took out naturalization papers in consequence of which his minor children also became citizens. What was his politics? German immigrants knew Washington favorably and took to his party by any name—even federalists. When Jefferson's party, anti-federalist, was changed to Republican, these same immigrants had a shuddering recollection of the French Republic under guillotine atrocities and would have none of that. Retracing the evolution of the old Federalists party, I knew that his sons espoused abolition and earlier were Whigs, but never Jacksonian democrats nor advocated State Bank currency.

Michael Esterly was by nature taciturn, austere and self-contained—in matters of family discipline a punctilious Teuton. In conversation with his peers he was frank and not without a keen sense of humor. The accounts that have come to me of the early days of emigration are convincing that he was as generous and helpful to unfortunate but deserving human kind as he was stern and indifferent to laggards and knaves. In whatever he undertook he was keen and deliberate. There was German method in his work and fine appreciation of order about his estate. His

The ESTERLY Pioneers and Their Contemporaries

philosophy of life divided the circle of the day in very nearly three equal parts, year in and year out—one for labor, one for rest, the remainder for recreation and, do not forget—contemplation. No honest laborer complained of harsh compelling service nor stint of food. In so far as I knew his sons and daughters, these race traits were drilled into them by their stern guiding father.

Anna Maria, last of Michael's children, was born in 1807. I use this date frequently; it makes other dates of comparison at least approximately true. There was hardship in 1807. The clearings were mere patches of three years' cutting, burning and grubbing. Probably both cabin and stables were bettered meantime. The smaller of our domestic animals had yet to be sheltered from predatory enemies. In those early years pioneers suffered much loss through depredations of the black bear. Grandchildren were regaled by firelight stories telling how the sties were broken down and raided and how the cries of captured pigs grew fainter and fainter in the bush. But never a word of swift retribution to the marauders was heard. "Where was the dog?" "Why didn't they shoot 'em?" "Why raise pigs for?" and so on, were the last words before nature stilled our outraged spirits in sleep.

BEAR STORIES

There was doubtless a wealth of good bear tales belonging to the neighborhood of Washingtonville and reaching into Section 5, but pioneers in the shuffle of practical events forgot to record them—forgot all but one typical encounter and the death of two bears put out of the way by unheroic bush-whacking tactics.

In my chapter on "Contemporaries" will be found the name of Neighbor Robison, whose cabin full of pioneer boys stood less than a half mile southeast of Michael Esterly's. One day, when Michael and his older sons were working in the clearing but a short distance from that of Neighbor Robison, the grand hailing sign of pig distress was heard. The father remarked to the boys: "Yetz haben du Baren wieder ihre Tagliche Schweine fleisch ver wuscht!" (Grabbed their daily pork!) Robison and his sons also sensed the panic among his unherded swine and knew precisely where this fresh attack was taking place. Wrapping his "wammus" about his free arm, with ax in hand he and his helpers and pack of dogs raced to the rescue, hounds leading on. These quickly found the bear with shoat in arms and her family of trailing cubs whimpering for their daily meat. The increasing confusion that followed did not greatly disturb the Esterlys, despite Robison's broadcasted yells for help they knew his pack of hounds with fine sense of strategy was dog-handling the cubs, and true to mother instinct the bear would forego all else to protect her young.

And so this account ends as all good bear stories should end—without tragedy. Robison outran the burdened bear, the shoat was rescued by the hounds and the cubs by their natural protector.

These two pioneers, Esterly and Robison, knew few words of common language, but in their frequent jovial recounting of that day's excitement, Robison never failed to express his chagrin in quitting the fight and losing the bear. "Ya wohl, Herr Robison," said his amused neighbor, "aber nexten time gook out! for die she-bear ist wirklich todlicher (deadlier) als der he-bar."

Years ago the fanciful and endearing tale of the Big Bear, the Middle sized Bear and the Little Bear banished all dread of their ancestors and left them among the present generation of children the most familiar of wild animals.

I fail to find in pioneer stories of Ohio a case of indictment returned against bears for manslaughter. I do not know where the first bear in Section 5 lived, but

The ESTERLY Pioneers and Their Contemporaries

I do know the spot where the last one perished, for an older Esterly boy told me one day when we were shooting at squirrels in the huckleberry woods that "right over there," pointing to a big oak, "they killed the last bear" on his grandfather Esterly's farm.

THE MYTH OF THE PANTHERS




SCARCELY had the incident of Neighbor Robison's discomfiture lost its thrill before a real terror started on its shuddering way and continued among two or three generations of little Esterlys for three quarters of a century or more.

The older sons of Michael Esterly, George and Jacob, had been set to the task of finishing off a run of maple sap, somewhat remote from the cabin—remote, I say, because oak trees held the ground about their cabin. The work continued late into the night. For some time before the crisis of this story the family dog (dawg?) was restless and apparently homesick. Suddenly the cry of a strange animal was heard. Each succeeding cry marked its guarded approach. The natural defender of our boys turned tail and betrayed the weakness of that helpless out post by whining. The challenging call of this intruder was not unlike that of a human being in great physical distress and when the green reflections of the camp fire from its eyes snote their senses the boys were chilled with terror. What a memorable night indeed to our boy scouts! However, they knew the efficacy of blazing torches in such predicaments. Now came the test. They drew live fagots from under the kettles and encircled themselves and their cowardly dog by waving them about. As the fire burned lower, with brand in one hand they renewed the wood with the other. Hours elapsed while this menace circled their camp—now close, now more distant—as if to marshall others of its kind to the attack. Finally their pacifist cur relaxed and lay down to cowardly repose. The night's terror was over. Tradition never passed along the name of this traitor, so this account dubs him insignificantly just plain "dawg."

The tale of this experience by son George and son Jacob spread quickly along our Trace and met the Pennsylvania Dutch emigrants going west. When they arrived at our cabin they admonished our Family that this animal was a Painter; one of many that were driven out by the Rappites—they then hastily moved out of range of the big marsh. New comers assured Michael that he was in a neighborhood of panthers, and a few highbrow hunters swore they were Catamounts and had always been Catamounts. There came no reply to these differences of opinion offered gratuitously by strangers, but to friend Mathias Lower Michael said jocularly, "Nein, Nein, Nur wilde Katzal"

Many's the time, when a youngster half past boyhood, that I requested recital of this powder painter, catamount, panther tale, by one or by all of a large family telling in discordant chorus of that sugar camp experience and as often relapsed into chill fear, as the sun sank slowly behind Gilbert's woods, that there might easily be a relict of pioneer panther still lurking along the fens of the Beaver Dahm!

THE BEAVER DAM

T affords me unusual satisfaction to devote a chapter to the untamed marsh near our Cabin Site. It went by the name of Beaver Dam, pronounced Beaver Dahm by Germans. It stretched a little west of north for several miles in a somewhat fan shape with Cherry Fork as the handle, in plain view of the Cabin.

To Michael Esterly's children it was a dangerous and benighted continent. It challenged their adventure by its unsounded quagmires and its impenetrable thickets. Along the "handle" of this morass there were big spoors and evidence of bloody struggles. There were sounds in the night time that were full of awe to the entire family.

In the quiet Overampt of Bachnang along Hentensbach these boys had worked and played (not too long at a time) in blissful ignorance of fear, but the contrasts about their new overampt constitute the pioneer stage on which they played their several acts during the formative period of their lives.

In reality this was not a dam in the accepted meaning of the word, but uncounted generations of beavers had impeded the flow of Cherry Fork in common with other confluent streams of the upper Little Beaver and made for themselves a habitat evidently well suited to their needs. I found no tradition that they bred here as late as 1804, but it is history that the pelts from all these colonies of beavers found their way, at the close of the 18th century, to Pittsburgh, over the McIntosh Trail and the "portage" between the Tuscarora and Cuyahoga Rivers to lower Sandusky and Detroit. They were the principal item of barter of our Indians. Most of the pelts went to Paris where they were manufactured into hats and marketed all over Europe. I could easily be persuaded to believe, if the Muntz letter remarked it, that on the landing day, July 4, 1804, our grandsire Michael wore a beaver hat made from Beaver Dam pelts.

I learned from the late Henry H. Smith, of Columbiana, whose father was an early settler, that the last Indian camp within the early limits of our neighborhood was pitched on the bluff west side of Mill Creek Valley, where the Columbiana-East Lewistown road intersects the Lima-Greenford highway. It was abandoned about 1801.

Around all these beaver dams from the time of speculative history raged unremitting war between the dominant, the cruel Iroquois tribes of the northeast and the less united Algonquin tribes of the northwest. Here was a part of that borderline history which Parkman has preserved for us in his invaluable accounts of early French traders and Jesuit missionaries outpost in the Great Northwest. Here the Algonquin mother need only whisper the terrible name Iroquois into the ear of her fretful child, to hush its cries and command instant silence.

The neighboring Sections too preserved the stone relics of peace and war. As clearings extended, every pioneer boy accumulated these antiquities and perchance in later life widened their significance to include the pre-historic peoples of the earth. To me Beaver Dahm was the most dangerous place within my little world, for which reason it was also the most fascinating.

WILD LIFE WITHIN THE MARSH

PERSONS with mere present-day knowledge of aquatic life in pioneer days cannot imagine the prodigious number of waterfowl and birds that flourished here at the time of our Family arrival. The most impressive scenes were staged at the equinoctial seasons when large flocks of wild geese, following the signal honks and steering instincts of their leaders, lowered their flight in the most unique alignment known in bird migration and settled down temporarily for food supplies. Following these a week later came loons, lake gulls, the stilted crane and herons, white and dark. Some varieties nested in this seclusion. The fall equinox repeated the exodus of the spring.

Flotillas of mallard, pintail, canvasback and shoveler ducks convoyed each other now up, now down stream until far-spent autumn closed its waters.

In this jungle as in all jungles tragedy stalked ceaselessly. The cunning red fox lived over near the big Sand hill and reared her family to industry. They took heavy toll of waterfowl. High water required one kind of stealth, low water another. The red fox possessed both.

The bald eagle soared about these feeding grounds from dawn until his dependents were surfeited. With a long straight swoop he strikes down his choice of fowls. A great whirl of water—a brief beating of wings—a few shrill outcries—and the struggle is over—back then on easy flight to the Old Eagle Tree where his mate and eaglets are expectantly waiting.

In due time our pioneers domesticated mallard ducks, reduced eagles to the vanishing point and for pastime, made life a burden to the foxes in Gilbert's Sand hills. In a word, waterfowl and about everything else changed ownership with the advent of white settlers.

The tanglewood of this beaver habitat was made up of many varieties of small trees. On the edges were goose plum trees and crab apple trees, the latter most redolent of the forest bloom. In these thickets wild pigeons reared their young and added them to the billions that clouded the earth in their migration seasons. The last of the world's passenger pigeons died in the Cincinnati Zoological Gardens September 1st, 1914, at the age of 28 years. (See picture.)



On the terrace land within our forest the Appalachian black bear was plentiful; along the glades were wapiti, misnamed elk, as Elk Run still shows; antelope and, a half-century earlier buffalo. The cowardly prairie wolf and terrifying wild cat hung about the kralls and sties, and with the bear constituted our chief marauding disturbers. The wooded rocky slopes west of Washingtonville were their final coverts from which they disappeared probably about 1810 or 1812. The smaller animals with the exception of the otter and one or two varieties of squirrel yet hold fast.

The ESTERLY Pioneers and Their Contemporaries

William Heald's survey gave Michael Esterly about one-fourth of the far-famed huckleberry swamp at the intersection of the two half section lines. In good season the output of this swamp would, if translated into pies, have supplied enough to cover its entire acreage. If the reader will pause on the bridge spanning Cherry Fork near the Cabin Site, and look toward the north, he will behold a large granitic boulder, called Nigger Head resting in the water. The first concept of geological forces that rocked Section 5 as between "Religion and Science" grew out of the true and simple story of this alien stone brought from the heights of Canada on a great ice sheet cycles of ages ago. Historic grounds are these with many pages of Nature's book truthfully expressed in them.

PIONEER FORESTS



NE sees clearly that the arts of civilization cannot flourish in a continuous expanse of forest. At first each settler made a patch of clearing for April planting—needed more and increasingly more acres and farms. Late in the 19th century our economic need of forests as conservators of rains and soils and the art of building began to cry to heaven for relief. These later years of stern readjustment behold with blanched expression a haphazard attempt to restore forest trees to many worn out profitless lands. They were reservoirs of energy and soil values. They were guardians of chemical values which they extracted from clay till and deposited in their own frame work, irresistible barriers against eroding floods and destructive mingling of Arctic fury and tropic cyclones in our mid-latitudes. They preserved aesthetic and spiritual virtues in the beauty of their massed splendors, in the pure stream that drew year round unfailing supplies to invite refreshing rains.

Our Wurttemberg family was reared in their native land to a knowledge of forest needs, and the generation of our five travelers maintained a liberal balance of wooded area. Jacob Esterly retained a magnificent forest of oaks in Beaver Township, just north of the residence of George Renkenberger (see Map) until his demise. He sensed the ruthless destruction of trees and true to training took his stand as a conservationist. The third generation swept our forests nearly clean. It seems well to mention here the trees that resisted so determinedly our cultivation, to call them by familiar names and record our valedictory and their obituary while yet a struggling few remain on our original entry. If a well-remembered tree stood there within the memory of my readers its name will very likely be found in the list that follows.

In practical prose the oak comes first. In our woods grew to lordly perfection, the white, red, black, burr, swamp and chestnut varieties of this family. Here flourished the wild cherry, generous almoner to the birds. Its fermented juice was the principal tangle-pedem of our Pennsylvania Dutch neighbors. Its lumber was our American mahogany, which, translated into furniture, is so industriously sought by collectors of antiques. This tree left its name enduringly stamped on the terminal of our 4400-mile journey.

No other tree was better known to Esterly youth than the hickory. It was the symbol of strength and flexibility. It was disciplinary to the youth of three generations who grew strong from its vitamins and repentant from its occasional castigations.

The ESTERLY Pioneers and Their Contemporaries

Our soil greatly favored the cucumber tree—a northern magnolia. Its symmetrical bole shot straight toward the zenith, “sixty feet without knot, limb, or woodpecker hole.” Its utilitarian values were in evidence at every turn of pioneer carpentry. Its lumber was a joy to our artisans,—white, easy to shape, combining maximum strength of fibre with minimum weight of wood. Cucumber hay-ladders, cucumber rafters, casements, sash and pump stocks are some of its finished products. The utilitarian worth of this beautiful tree lifted every pioneer ax against it and I search in vain in Section 5 for a survivor of its noble kind.

The basswood or American lindentree thrived side by side with the magnolia cucumber. Its lumber had common properties with the magnolia. It reached a diameter of three feet in favorable soils and in open spaces attained a large crown, which made it a favorite shade tree. When summer opened, its buds leaped into bloom and distilled their fragrant nectar to which the busy little bee came and with tender care bore away this sweetest of nature’s condiments, whether for its own use or that of robber bears or thrifty pioneers. I recall a picture of little Esterlys in action under the protection of a giant “lin.” It was on a full blown June day and the summer birds were chanting gayly. The haymakers came betimes to refresh themselves from the stone water jug there and catch a little breathing spell beneath the cool shade—while they wiped their brows oozing with honest sweat, with wisps of shady nook grass. Here was a theme such as Millet often glorified on his canvas, but could not rival. I have planted many a linden tree in obedience to the urge of that happy day.

The spreading chestnut tree was only fairly plentiful in our township, but sufficiently so to furnish those straight economical post and rail fences (common to the Overampt of Bachnang) along the old Pittsburgh and Cherry Fork road. In fact, these unique fences announced for many years Michael Esterly’s home farm.

All along our creek from source to confluence stood the mottled resolute sycamores. Their ample girths were often smeared with wild honey and the honey comb and lacerated by tell-tale gorings of generations of bear families. The proportions of these trees were gigantic by the time they had survived three centuries of struggle with winter storms. Infirmities had to break them down piece by piece. They were the most resistant of our trees to the woodman’s ax. Years after the other trees of the forest had succumbed, like veterans of many wars and many scars, these fought on. In their decadent age when native vines bound together their broken parts and spread over them a mantle of green foliage and purple fruit, their fantastic forms left enduring impressions of this defiant brand of deeply rooted trees. Had all the trees in our original forest been sycamores our clearings had not been completed until the days of dynamite.

The willow family agrees with the sycamore’s choice of soils and is generally its nearest neighbor in low lands. Little sentiment was wasted on the “pussy” willow in earlier years. There were surer signs of the advent of spring than pussy willow blossoms. However, the yellow willow had many utilitarian values. Most pioneer families understood the art of basket making. The materials necessary were the lithe, light, tenacious branches, switches of this tree. A single large tree of this variety was sufficient supply of withs for a dozen families. Orchardists used them for binding their vines on trellises, and the thatcher used them for straw roofing in the early years of our settlement.

The ESTERLY Pioneers and Their Contemporaries

Our principal beeches were of red, white and blue varieties. The soil of Section 5 favored oaks rather than beeches. In rich soils the oaks crowded the beeches out of house and home and in lean soils the beeches took possession. There were many uses for their heavy close grained wood. On a farm that tolerated beech it was used for framing lumber and when sawmills were installed the red beech was used most successfully for siding; likewise it was used for carpenters' planes, the big plane, the middle-sized and the little plane. It endured heavy loads, worked clean and took polish but did not endure contact with the ground. Beech nuts, in fact most nuts, constitute the old-time mast—a word of German origin meaning over-feeding or fattening. A good season of mast would fatten three hogs to one razorback that rooted his living out in the clearing.

But our beeches had additional qualities worthy of enduring praise. For centuries they have retained their aesthetic values. Into their clean gray bark living youth has from time immemorial cut its entwined monograms in evidence of plighted troth. Beeches have added their distinctive charm to balance manorial lawns and parks wherever hard wood beauty is appreciated. They are glorified in England, Belgium, Germany and the Balkans. The earliest epitaph that I have knowledge of pertaining to our community reads: "Her J Rogers kild a ber 1797." This rustic inscription was cut into the bark of a white beech tree standing at the head of a small gully not far from the farm now owned by Harvey Firestone about three miles east of Columbiana.

Was it not of beech bark that Johann Gutenberg cut out the entire German alphabet in movable letters for the edification of his children? Is he not celebrated in annual memorials where the German language is spoken, as the man who gave the world "the art preservative of all arts"? And is not the renaissance period that dispelled the clouds of the Dark Ages literally founded on his grand conception of movable type?

Our soil favored the ash trees. Three or four varieties lived here; two preferred the edges of our swamps and the others the upland. Of these several kinds the white ash served many uses. It rivaled the hickory in some respects and exceeded it in others. Our later houses were generally floored with ash lumber. Our sympathies may well go to the man who ploughed and grooved, sawed and shaved this wood into due shape, but once the task was finished it did service for three generations.

THE PERFECT TREE

The Old Eagle Tree, whose didactic lesson of exemplary patience endears our early school readers, now claims introduction to the other aristocrats of the forest. There were many Eagle trees on our paternal lands; we youngsters were told they were yellow poplars but the author of the lesson correctly named this one *tulip tree* in his story. In its prime, whether we call it yellow poplar or tulip tree, it is in most respects a rival of any other choice from among the stalwarts of the forest. In symmetry of shape and perpendicular growth its only approach is the magnolia cucumber; in height it out-tops its competitors. Its glossy fishtail leaves and thick bark are immune to insect life and bacterial decay. Its root system is a marvel of diverging supports. Its natural self-pruning leaves few knot holes to mar its surface or substratum. Apart from its aesthetic rating it commanded high respect for the strength, lightness and durability of its lumber, and so our old tulip trees and their

The ESTERLY Pioneers and Their Contemporaries

younger growths were among the first to yield their places to the needs of shingles, siding and furniture demand. I can find now not even a hope of its posterity in our original tract.

Both black and white walnut trees flourished in these home forests, but the latter rarely reached large growth. Its natural habitat is the first terrace of creek bottoms. It thrives best among the lower topped trees, water beech, crab apple, wild plum and red ash. Its fruit, the butternut, belongs to the group of nuts which constitute the mast. This walnut grew generally as a somewhat subservient race. It furnished the emblem of secessionists (butternut) in the Civil War.

There remains now to complete my list the noble, graceful American Elm, theme of Harvard panegyric and song, whose rugged beauty and sheltering arms called from the heart of George P. Morris the immortal lines of

"Woodman spare that tree!
Touch not a single bough."

In a scrapbook compiled by my wife when a school girl, this exquisite but anonymous gem speaks in rapturous soliloquy:

I AM THE ELM TREE

I am the Elm tree. I love to bend *best*
Above some country lane where cattle wend
Their homeward way. I dearly love to fill
Some spot upon the hot and sunny hill
With cool and shadow; love to stand
Beside the wall between the meadow land
And upland reaches, where the goldenrod
Nods all day long and where the crickets sing,
And where the meadow grass is whispering.
With dainty wreaths I love my trunk to twine,
To rock the oriole's nestlings
And to call them mine.

GEORGE ESTERLY

NOTES ON THE GEORGE ESTERLY BRANCH OF THE MICHAEL AND CATHERINE ESTERLY FAMILY

These fragmentary accounts are given with the hope that they will serve as guide lines in the further search for wider information by individual members of the George Esterly Branch. It is possible that one or more families descended from him will be able to supplement them with additional knowledge not procurable through sources to which I have turned in the preparation of my subject.

George	1790-186(?)	Married.....Hefele
		Married Frederica Heverly, 1811-1892
Jacob	1792-1875	Married Barbara Muckenfoos 1855
Catherine	1795-1851	Married George Renkenberger, 1789-1851
Michael	179(?) -1804	Drowned in Allegheny River
John	1803-1886	Married Miranda Scoggins 1813-1880
Anna Maria	1807-1843	Married John Jonathan Rukenbrod, 1805-1840

The ESTERLY Pioneers and Their Contemporaries

GEORGE ESTERLY



GEORGE ESTERLY was a lad about fourteen years of age when he left the Duchy of Wurttemberg with his parents, who were among the emigrants gathered under the leadership of George Rapp, preacher and economist.

His family and the families of this group were farmers and craftsmen in wood and the arts related to tillage. A small proportion of them wrought in iron. Many were skilled in cabinet making; some of them were wheelwrights. All told, they were prepared in what most concerns pioneering; but so far as I have been able to learn, there was not a professional man among them.

George and his younger brother, Jacob, had received tuition in the schools of the Duchy. These were both general and parochial and were regarded as well directed in the preparatory steps for higher education. Schools were a matter of compulsion in that time. On reaching their destination in America, they found within a few years a growing number of English speaking neighbors and soon acquired ability to carry on conversation. Their neighboring boys hobbled along in Pennsylvania Dutch and the Esterly children struggled along in broken English. The father, Michael, never acquired the use of this language. He was forty-two years of age on his arrival at Baltimore.

George was not the prevailing type of Esterly derivative. He was like his father in taciturnity, but unlike his in austerity. He was less stocky and less disposed to social mingling than the other of Michael's children. George's children were singularly free from their father's handicaps and were blessed with social qualities well appreciated among their kinspeople and neighbors.

Fortunately the log which records the long journey from Hentensbach to Cherrysbach, a distance of 4500 miles by circuitous laps, has been preserved and one of that party of emigrants speaks to us in a tongue easily understood. The record indicated is known as the John George Muntz letter. It came indirectly into our family through a daughter of Wilhelm to whom it was given by the son of John George Muntz; this daughter, while a teacher in the Esterly school district, gave a copy of it to the John Esterly family about the year 1865. (See page 2).

The remaining members of John Esterly's family recount with each passing of our natal day how their father had it impressed on him by his elders that he was one year old when the party landed, July 4, 1804. He was born in the year 1803.

Our family soon left the neighborhood of Pittsburgh after the tragic death of their son Michael and about the first week of September they arrived at Dixonville, now Columbiana.

The records of the General Land Office, at Washington, D. C., show that on September 14th, 1804, Michael Esterly entered the southeast quarter of Section 5, Fairfield Township and on the same date, the west half of the same section, making a total of 480 acres of "Congress Land." Several years later he entered the southeast quarter of Section 2 in Green Township and purchased the west half of the same section from one Michael Coxens, who in turn assigned it to John Michael Esterly. Here is the only record so far found in which the word John appears as an additional given name. On February 1810 he had Letters Patent for those four parcels of land totaling 960 acres.

The ESTERLY Pioneers and Their Contemporaries

His cabin site (the sacred spot which every well reared family delights to honor) is about 200 yards east of the crossing of Cherry Fork and the old Pittsburgh road. Tradition has it that Michael Esterly opened that part of this road which passes through the west half section on which he built his first abode. The road was deflected by an extensive fan-shaped marsh correctly named Beaver Dam. The handle of the fan was within a stone's throw from Michael's cabin which stood on the north side of the present road bed. The terrace just south of it was reserved for a more permanent building, should that be vouchsafed by Providence.

Here a substantial structure was erected which later served the family of Grandfather John Esterly, wife and twelve children. In the Armistice Year, 1918, it, too, went the way of a world chaos, by fire.

The work of clearing and building was typical of pioneer times. A characteristic of those days was a cheerful willingness to lend a helping hand to new comers. Michael was skillful and robust. There was no neighbor who did not profit by his return service. His sons were not of an age to assist with the heavy task of barring out the fast-approaching winter, but there was labor for hire and cabin materials all too plenty. When it was finished it had one door, two windows on ground floor, and one in attic; it was roofed with clapboards held down with green poles, in turn weighted by stones. Six persons were housed, the youngest a year and a month or so old, old enough to be heard, and of the right age to need the solicitous care which lengthened his span of life to four score and three years.

In this home, George Esterly grew to manhood. Lean years of record follow the time spent in his father's house. About 1814 or 1815 he was married to a young woman named Hefe. Her given name, I fear, is lost. The name Hefe in the Duchy of Wurtemberg included distinguished councillors and churchmen. She was probably one of the emigrants who came with Rapp's adherents.

About the time of George's marriage, when the record of his movements is renewed, he was farming near the village of New Springfield, five miles from Columbiana. For the purpose of recovering possible records, monuments and local traditions of his family, this farm and the neighborhood about it became a matter of diligent search late in the summer of 1928.

Among my earliest childhood recollections is that of visiting his family with my parents. Something unusual to my experience fixed that event in my mind. Maybe it was the sight of luscious pears wastefully strewn over the yard, or the little stream as of a spring, bridged over with old hewn logs, but more likely was it that several men brought home that day an armful of game in rabbit form, part of which was prepared for the noontime meal. Here it was that I saw for the first time a gun that would shoot twice at the same time, as I was told, and here I tasted for the first time the meat of a furry animal. It was this visit that obsessed me with an unyielding desire for fire-arms that continued through the waking and dreaming hours of all my boyhood days. But these recollections carried no knowledge of the roads that led to the farm I was seeking or of persons who could point the way thither.

In an extended search for contemporary families of George Esterly I was greatly assisted by Mr. S. S. Weaver, whose persistent enquiries brought us to the home of Uriah Shillinger whose father's farm nearly adjoined that of George Esterly. He was at the time of my interview nearing his ninetieth year, somewhat afflicted with infirmities but vigorous in mental activity.

The ESTERLY Pioneers and Their Contemporaries

It was very evident that the opportunity to review his long acquaintance with his old time neighbor afforded him extreme pleasure. To test the validity of my memory I asked him about the little stream that flowed between house and barns, the footlog bridge, the Seckle pears, and the proclivities of those Esterly men for the chase. With hearty expression he verified each one of them.

The purpose of my visit was fully explained and the information desired was somewhat directed by questions which appear in the interview. I met Mr. Shillinger on one of those rare late August days when summer and autumn are blending. He was living near New Waterford, considerable distance from his boyhood home, but he frequently visited his sister whose residence is near the farmhouse I had repeatedly sought. I asked Mr. Shillinger to give me explicit directions for locating the George Esterly homestead.

"Well, you go to the middle of New Springfield, turn north and follow that road about an eighth of a mile where it goes northeast toward the Shroy Church; keep on this northeast course until you come to the new County highway, about one mile, and there you turn north again, about one mile. On the left hand side of the road you will find a little burial ground and a few evergreen trees on it and one marble grave stone. Almost across the road the lane opens to the house.

"Did you know George Esterly well, and the members of his family?"

"Yes, I knew him very well and all of his family. I lived close to them until I was about thirty years old. George did not talk very much but he was a good listener. He didn't mix up much among his neighbors and I didn't see him at gatherings so far as I can recall. He spoke English but preferred to speak in German. I don't think he went to churches very much but he was a good man for all that. He never talked about his neighbors and never used bad rough language, and he was kind to everybody he had round him. He took to me from the time I was a boy. I worked for him and some of his sons. They had some interests in his farming until Christian got married. After a while Benjamin also was married and moved up into the Lipp neighborhood. I think that Benjamin went to school at Poland for a time, anyway he seemed to take a good deal of interest in schools."

"No, I can't recall the names of all his children but I recognize them as you give them. I cannot tell whether they were in the order you put them. Catherine I know was the eldest and she married Daniel Miller. He was a fine man and a leader over there among the farmers and both of them were great Methodists."

"Yes, he had a very good farm. The soil was a rich clay loam and well drained. A good sized creek ran through his place big enough to run a sawmill a good part of the year. The grain fields were along the upper road where the land was more rolling. His pasture land was creek bottom and clearings on the slopes."

"George didn't work all the time and he didn't make his boys do so either. Of course when there was rush in harvest time, it was different. Things moved pretty steady. He always had hired help and men liked to work for him."

After an experience of 42 years as teacher and administrator of Public Schools I see the value of the present regime of modern school men to combat moral and mental ennui and anticipate the impending deterioration of our race by re-creating through recreation. George Esterly and in fact all of Michael Esterly's children, after the manner of true Wurttembergers, often blessed the coming day,

"When toil remitting lent its turn to play."

The ESTERLY Pioneers and Their Contemporaries

"I helped a great deal on this farm. One of the things I liked to do was to help drive the fatted cattle to the Philadelphia markets. It was a dusty trip many times and I had a lot of excitement when the cattle got scared and ran every which way. We all rode horses on these trips. At some places we hired boys to help us. He had a good deal of business interest about this time with getting young stock for the farm and I drove his horse many times. The older he got the more he hired me to drive."

"No, George didn't clear his farm entirely, by far. They used to say that he had the best timber in the whole neighborhood, but he did not clear it off, and just burn up those big trees, for making more farming land."

George Esterly had time and took time to reflect. In fact, deliberation sat on the brow of all those early Esterlys, and is a fine characteristic of many of their beneficiaries. He had ample harvests and pastures, so why should he hasten to strive against these primeval and giant trees, hew them down and char their grandeur to ashes for the sake of a few more acres of tillage. Such wastefulness was not an attribute of Wurttembergers old or young. In the land of his forebears stood forests on the same ground and in the same state of productiveness as those which sheltered the caveman, *Homo Heidelbergensis*, the new Adam of recent scientific theorists. And so the fine timber of his forest was allowed to ripen for better years of demand when industries shot up as by magic on all sides, and not even then was it "slashed."

The rapid growth that followed the opening of the Ohio river to steamboat navigation in 1811 was the event that halted for a time the haste of land seekers to Western Ohio. Land could be bought at this time under Federal Patent in areas less than a full section, and payments made in installments. Silver was the principal metal of current coin.

The hamlet of Unity, southeast of New Springfield, became the center of a thriving community early in the century, and from this center, land was entered in Springfield township. Pittsburgh grew from a town of 1500 in 1804 to 5000 in 1810, and was now a center of distribution as well as a buying market. When steamboats (1811) made it possible to ascend streams, here produce of many kinds from these farms was in demand, sent down the Ohio, and the same boats that carried down these loads returned with other materials of exchange. The days of flat boats were now well spent. Petersburg, another hamlet, soon took the lead from Unity, and New Springfield came later.

The census of 1820 showed a population of more than 22,000 in Columbiana county. This county then included a part of what is now Mahoning county, and this fact explains why the records of courts and Recorder are found for Springfield and Green townships, in (New) Lisbon, prior to 1846.

Before George Esterly's death he saw Columbiana County take first place in wool growing and fruit growing, third place in population, and rank as one of the banner counties of Republicism—a goodly land for our ancestry to reach after more than half a life span had been passed by sire Michael in a country more distinguished as a government of oppression than a commonweal for free and self-respecting men. Strange indeed is it that the Germanic peoples of Western Europe resolved their governance as a law making prerogative into a House of Commons, while their kinspeople, also Teutonic who remained on the continent were held under the grasp of Hohenzollern and Hapsburg autocracies which required a weltering World War to crush.

The ESTERLY Pioneers and Their Contemporaries

"You told me, Mr. Shillinger, that George Esterly had considerable business interests."

"When I was eighteen or twenty years old, George built a sawmill on his farm. It ran by water power. The saw moved up and down and the gearing had to be stopped each time a board or slab was sawed off, and then the log had to be moved to line again. It was hard work. The saw had to be sharpened every sawing day for the steel was not good enough to stand the knots and hard bark well. There was a big demand from his neighbors and from the towns about for lumber. You see the first buildings made from rough logs were beginning to go down, and carpenters could build a man a good house now for much less expense. There were many barns in his day that were better than the house on the same farm. The railroad came through Columbiana about the middle of that century and he had his men haul a great deal of timber and lumber over there. This took some fine walnut and poplar off his farm."

"I think this mill was changed from water to steam power, for the stream did not furnish a very steady flow. Labor was cheap then and there were always men coming into his neighborhood who had no money to settle down."

"I do not know whether George took any interest in politics. He was not given to attend public meetings. Politics in New Springfield was red hot Democratic about the time of the war. His sons were Republican and so was Daniel Miller. I think one of the Esterly boys went to war right at the beginning."

These brief glimpses of homely occupations, of personal characteristics and relations with the community constitute generally the annals of pioneer families not fortified by records that ramify vitally into community life. Under the impediments which were imposed upon those early settlers, the matter of family records, present or past, was excluded by the exigencies of each passing hour. But the devotion to duty, to service and straightforward living, of George Esterly's family and the families of his father's house, stand forth as a challenge to the many vaunted panegyrics which one may read without discovering that "Their works do follow them."

The final resting place of George Esterly and his wife is neglected and abandoned; but the generations of their far flung families bear evidence of the strong wholesome character of their forebears.

The first child born to this family was Catherine ; 1816 is fixed as her natal year. The next child was named Christian, born 1818. This date appears on his tombstone well preserved in a private burial ground a short distance from Calla, Mahoning County. The children following Christian were in order: Benjamin, Michael, Sophia, Jacob and Solomon. Benjamin was seven years older than my father, Joseph Keyser (1828). My mother (1831) was eighteen years old at the time the wife of George Esterly died. At the time of his mother's death, 1849, Solomon, youngest of George Esterly's children, came into the family of his uncle, John Esterly, for a time and was then about sixteen years old. His birth year is thereby fixed at 1833. No record of Michael and Sophia and Jacob is found, though tradition has it that the latter reared a large and exemplary family.

Catherine, oldest of George Esterly's children, married Daniel Miller. She was a woman of pleasing personality, hospitable and interesting in conversation. Her husband was a prosperous farmer and a leader in his community in many ways.

The ESTERLY Pioneers and Their Contemporaries

Both husband and wife took serious interest in the education of their children and both were consistent members of the Methodist Episcopal Church. Their son Manasseh preparatory to entering the ministry, finished a literary course in Mt. Union College and thus became the first of the Esterly descendants to experience the value of college discipline and education. Catherine was the first of the American born Esterlys to seek membership in a strictly denominational church body. So far as my knowledge of and acquaintance with the adult Esterlys of her generation goes, all adults were communicants, members of the German Reformed, Lutheran, Presbyterian or German Baptist bodies. Catherine and Daniel Miller are buried near the village of New Middletown, Mahoning County.

Of the family of Christian Esterly (1818) I have fewer accounts for the reason that they lived at considerable distance from the other Esterly people. He married Margaret Wire, an estimable young woman of good family, whose parents lived near New Middletown. Michael distributed his landed estate among his children in 1836. The portion assigned to his son George, he in turn bequeathed in whole or in part to his son Christian. Christian's death occurred in 1881, but the property remained in the possession of his immediate heirs for a period of fifteen years.

Mrs. Ina Esterly Brown, great grand-daughter of George Esterly, became a trustee of the Michael Esterly Memorial Association upon its organization in 1929, as a representative of his branch of the family.

Benjamin, third in line of descent in George Esterly's family, departed widely from the characteristics of his father. The latter was taciturn, his son vivacious, of excellent address and possessed of good social qualities; his father was self-contained, quiet, but, happily, free from austerity; the son was typically Esterly in build while the father was medium in physique and far from hardy. About 1845, Benjamin married Mary Ann Redlinger. Her family came from Zurich, Switzerland, where her father was engaged in the making of harpsichords. The long history of her family name is so germane in this connection that I give it place in this limited paper.

Along the upper valleys of the Danube in Switzerland but especially in Wurttemberg, many ancient walled towns remain whose names terminate in the fuller syllable "ing." These towns claim origin in the Allemanic-Teutons who appeared on the hinterland of Roman territory before the days of the Caesars. Here they hung with tenacity until with mace and bow and boar spear and shield of wood covered with pigskin, they overthrew the Roman Empire in the fifth century. In the next century they were in the gradual process of becoming subjects of a new power—the Roman Church.

A few illustrations will be useful in connecting the old Teutonic walled towns, Ehrling, Essling, Kissling, Oehrling and Redling, with the modern towns that correspond so radically in name. The declensional ending "en" of later German names converts Ehrling to Ehrlingen, and Redling to Redlingen; and the suffix "er" creates new word forms indicating dwellers in. Redling now becomes Redlingen, town, and Redlinger, a native dweller within Redlingen.

Mary Ann Redlinger-Esterly was a pillar in this family. She brought to it the needfulest help of that whole community, books and newspapers done in English, the language of business, politics and the courts. There were reasons why Benjamin's grandfather Michael, had spoken by interpreters and some reasons why his father, George, did not mingle easily among his neighbors, but Benjamin's day required shifting from half-German, half-Pennsylvania Dutch, to workable English. As the

The ESTERLY Pioneers and Their Contemporaries

hybrid German-English dialect stood, it had no literature, no dictionary and no grammar. Its vocabulary was limited to a few hundred words, some unprintable and some bastard English, to face a worldfull of pressing ideas.

When the family was about to carry its Penates to a new country, the children had made commendable advance in the fundamentals of grade instruction. Calvin, the eldest son, was admitted to the United States Military Academy from Kansas only a few years after he took up his residence in Ottawa, and finished his course with high rank. "These are my jewels," said the mother of the Gracci,—so spoke many a mother of the Mary Ann Redlinger Esterly type and opportunity. But, alas, the favorable tide came to few Esterly mothers of her generation.

Mr. Shillinger recalled in a foregoing paragraph that Benjamin moved into the Lipp neighborhood shortly after his marriage, also that one of the Lipps some years later married a sister of Mary Ann Redlinger, and they accompanied Benjamin Esterly's family to Kansas.

The Redlinger family had enjoyed advantages of schools in Zurich, and the society of cultured people. They reflected their good rearing in such a becoming manner that they were held in high esteem by their newly acquired friends. These sisters had some accomplishments in music and had attained a fair proficiency in the use of English before they left Zurich. It was through this intellectual and gracious legacy which his wife brought to her husband, that Benjamin learned of the opportunities in the open Middle West—Kansas. The resultant of many lines of enquiry led him to Ottawa, a village or maybe only a hamlet at that time, on the filmy edge of safe venture, for Kansas drought and plague of grasshoppers, her sand storms and alkaline waters, cyclones and tornadoes, were risks no less than the turbulent Atlantic in the time of Michael. In Ottawa, Benjamin made investments but about 1878 he started for the newly admitted state, Colorado. After parting with his family at this time, no word of him ever reached his people. Foul play was always suspected and was doubtless the cause of his disappearance.

Amelia, oldest of his children, married Arthur Willis. She was living in Ottawa at the time of her death, 1927. She was the only one of Benjamin's family to reach advanced age.

Calvin, after the required five year term of service as Lieutenant in the regular army, resigned his commission and took up business in San Francisco. Here he died in 19—. Lloyd, following the lead of his brother, Calvin, went to one of the Golden Gate cities and lived there to his death. Charles held his residence in Ottawa. Wilson settled in El Paso, Texas. His daughter, Amelia, was chosen by the Michael Esterly Memorial Association upon its organization in 1929, as a trustee representing the George Esterly Branch of the family.

The interview with Mr. Shillinger is renewed now.

Can you tell me anything about Michael and Sophia?

"I recall their names, that is all, except that they were buried in the lot at the end of the lane. I think that all of the Esterly family who are buried there had tombstones. They have fallen over by this time but I believe you could find out their dates by uncovering the sod."

What recollection have you of Solomon?

"He went to California while the gold rush was on. A good many boys and men went there from our neighborhood. One of the boys whose name was Shilling went

The ESTERLY Pioneers and Their Contemporaries

along. Solomon was coaxed to go along with this party. I don't know what route they took to reach California."

The brief annals of Solomon, youngest son of George Esterly, endear him to our memory. They come down in that clear, penetrating light which makes impressions indelible on the soul. Miss Rachel Esterly only recently brought out of her store of family recollections the summary which here follows :

"When Solomon was a boy about sixteen years of age, his mother died and he made his home then with our family for a while. I recall that my parents in later years always spoke of him in terms of affection. He was a lovable and tractable boy. They regarded him more and more as a son as time went on. He was not a robust boy and on the other hand he was not puny, or afflicted with ailments but was cast by nature in delicate rather than vigorous mold. He conformed to the requirements of his foster parents in best of spirits and with his schoolmates was a favorite. It was a sorrowful day when he left us and returned to his father's house."

From the very year his mother passed away, 1849, the stirring accounts of California gold mines held first place among stalwart men and romantic venturesome youth. The impulse to dare fortune, good or bad, got beyond parental control in more than one family in the Esterly neighborhood. Urge yielded to determination, equipment, and then to fateful journey to the Golden West. A group of young men, "buddies" no doubt, prevailed and Solomon joined. Long heavy months passed before word was returned to his father and when it did come it was not in Solomon's hand. The communication was brief and definite: "The long trip was too much for him. The doctor said he was not strong enough for the rough work and bad shelter of the camps."

Cast in too delicate mold. Another long wait and then came one more letter to the father. His son, his youngest son, gathered strength to say, "I hope I may get home to die. I do not want to be buried in this God-forsaken country."

Many years have gone since that wistful letter was written but the pathos of it survives. Somewhere within the vaulted canyons of the Sacramento, the remains of Solomon Esterly were laid with the brief and unconventional services of miner and prospector.

George Esterly married a second time, didn't he?

"Yes, after the death of his first wife he married Frederica Heverly. She was a near neighbor of ours."

"Aunt Rica" was often referred to as an amiable woman, highly regarded by her community, hospitable and of a social disposition. She survived her husband nearly a quarter of a century and died in 1892 at the age of 81 years. She was buried in the Shroy churchyard two and a half miles northeast of New Springfield.

In concluding my interview with Mr. Shillinger, I asked him for information concerning the changes that later years brought to George Esterly.

"I left New Springfield neighborhood a good while before he died and did not hear very much about him then. He rented out some of his fields and, I think, disposed of some of his property in New Springfield. He got almost helpless late in life. He was so bent over that he could not sit on the driver's seat when he left his farm. He had a cushion and he kneeled on that and steadied himself by holding on the seat. I helped him numerous times into his conveyance. We had to lift him into it. I was present at his funeral. I forgot to tell you that I drove their family convey-

The ESTERLY Pioneers and Their Contemporaries

ance at the burial of his first wife. George was buried by her side. Their graves were on the side along the road and just inside the fence along that road. They are both buried in their private burial lot almost across from the lane that still leads down to the farmhouse."

This closed our interview, August, 1928. To Uriah Shillinger I am indebted for the recovery of much that appears in these notes and I can express my appreciation of his services best by acknowledging them here.

His death occurred in June, 1929.

NOTES ON THE JACOB ESTERLY BRANCH

OF THE . . . MICHAEL AND CATHERINE ESTERLY FAMILY

THIS Branch has transmitted to Mr. Aaron Esterly grandson, much detail of its early life. From his "Traditions and Reminiscences" I have been able to replace missing and salient links in our early pioneer life and certain facts concerning Michael Esterly and the Rukenbrod families. His full paper is in the hands of the Secretary of the Michael Esterly Memorial Association, Columbiana, Ohio. Acknowledgement of his assistance is registered with appreciation at this time.

Jacob Esterly remained in his father's home until he was about 18 years of age and then served apprenticeship to a cabinet maker in Marlboro, Stark County, Ohio. About 1816 or 1817 he was married to Barbara Muckenfoos, whose family lived in the New Springfield community. No praise of mine can do justice to the many virtues of this heart-full woman. Her husband added to the family the best qualities of manhood. He was devoted, amiable, capable and tolerant. He was free from patriarchal severity and kept open house to his neighbors and friends. From one service alone of this husband and wife we may respect all others, for in addition to their own large family of nine boys and girls, they reared three nieces to the age of marriage and a grandchild, Susan Nold, who repaid their generous care by taking on herself, after the death of Barbara in 1855, the duties of housekeeper in a service of twenty years.

I found an important factor in the chronicles of early Columbiana that was lost to tradition even in this family. "In 1820 Jacob Esterly built a log building on the S. E. corner of Main and Friend Streets." Why important is this trifling announcement? Because it was the event that influenced in later years five of his sons to elect business ventures in this village! The building remained in the Esterly name for more than a century and housed for many years the Post Office with David Esterly postmaster in charge of it.

Here Jacob Esterly carried on the business of cabinet making and probably began his work on the Esterly fanning mill which found its way very generally into the entire farming community.

The ESTERLY Pioneers and Their Contemporaries

For some equitable reason his father Michael gave him in 1830, six years before he finally divided his estate among his other children, the south half of the S. E. quarter section of Section No. 5 and Jacob's family moved from Columbiana. They had now six children.

The present generation will recall the superb Esterly Grove which stood in the very southeast corner of our original entry. Here were discussed the issues of slavery and the Rebellion; recruits came forward under inspiring speeches accenting Abraham Lincoln's call for new levies. Here too the bitter political harangues on reconstruction were fulminated against the South which are yet an echo in the ears of a few of our family. But of all occasions that called for public service, Morgan's Raid, ending in his capture near Lisbon, Ohio, July 26, 1863, comes first. The crude monument showing the spot of his surrender marks the most northern advance of Confederate arms. It stands 60 miles deeper in Union territory than Hancock's Headquarters at Gettysburg.

Following these came the national issues, of resumption of specie payments and protective tariff, the moral issues of temperance reform; now denominational preaching, gala celebrations of Independence Day, event doubly significant in our families, and picnic relaxation closed the events of this social rendezvous.

When Jacob's farm passed to the ownership of other hands, the usual destruction of forests quickly followed and so the Esterly Grove reservation which no price would purchase in Jacob's time, disappeared as the most conspicuous and beautiful pioneer landmark in Fairfield Township.

Jacob and Barbara Esterly remained Quietists by training but frequently attended denominational churches.

149 descendents of this parentage are recorded in our Genealogical Tables. Barbara Esterly died in 1855, Jacob in 1875.

NOTES ON THE RENKENBERGER BRANCH .. OF THE ..

MICHAEL AND CATHERINE ESTERLY FAMILY



MUCH difficulty and many disappointments have stood in the way of getting the historic setting of this Branch. The reason for the brevity of this chapter appears as it progresses.

The home life of Michael Esterly's family opens now with the dispersion of his children to family life of their own. Expectant readers are asking in modern terms, "Wasn't there any romance to relieve the tedium of pioneer life?" Of romance in Michael's dictatorship only one incident appears and that is almost too good to withstand much challenge.

"Dr." Joe Gilbert, our best story teller, says in a letter under date of 1924, that his grandfather and great-grandfather came over the sea with the Rapps and on that memorable journey a courtship sprang up between Catherine Esterly and George Renkenberger.

The ESTERLY Pioneers and Their Contemporaries

I would not ruin my brief on this Branch of the family by mere question of fact! I am proud to learn that nine year old Fraulein Katrina circumvented the keen eye of her pater which slumbered not neither did it sleep in any case of childhood courtship I have found in Esterly tradition. I pay respectful tribute to young George in his continued homage which culminated in the bonds of wedlock and ended in 1851, when both husband and wife forgot in eternal sleep their courtship on the crowded "Aurora."

It is an impression that they began their married life in the neighborhood of New Springfield about 1814. Later they moved to the Esterly neighborhood (See map.) In 1836 Michael Esterly divided his estate and this family received its patrimony in land situate in his Green Township entry near or on the present site of Calla.

It has been impossible to get more than a trace of the home life of this, the most numerous Branch of Michael's family, and only by the fortunate mention of the name Homsher was I enabled to enroll pretty fully its members. 235 lineal descendants are recorded in our Genealogical Tables, date of 1929. I here acknowledge the cordial support of Joseph E. Homsher and Mrs. Nettie France in my compilation of these Tables.

The Renkenberger parents reared five children, Anna Mary (born 1816), Barbara (born 1818), Lydia, Elizabeth and Anna. Shortly after the death of their parents in 1851 all except Barbara moved to Noble Co. Indiana and settled in or about Kendallville and Albion its county seat.

It is my understanding that John Esterly, eldest son of Jacob Esterly, purchased the Renkenberger holdings about 1855. (See map.)

Family records were widely scattered or lost at the time of my canvas for historic data, so much of interest and value in their home activities I fear is forever lost.

About the year 1870 Joseph Gilbert, physician, son of Jacob and Barbara Renkenberger Gilbert, took up residence in Kendallville, Indiana, and continued his profession there until 1924. It was a day worth remembering when cousin "Dr. Joe" visited his relatives in the Esterly neighborhood. The family of Jacob and Barbara Gilbert lived but a short distance from our Cabin Site. Their children were keenly alert and active in all social affairs of the Cherry Fork District. They were leaders in school activities, original in thought and expression, daring and given on any occasion to agreeable pranks. The stage beckoned to two of them but evidently they put aside the offer of this muse. Their parents and mine lived in mutual regard for many many years. One of their grand sons, Gilbert Fitzpatrick, physician and surgeon rose to international eminence in his profession. For 27 years he has been on the Medical Staff of the Surgeon General of the United States. He represented his government in the principal International Conventions for investigation and control of diseases incident to the World War and the dangers of Isthmian diseases of the Suez and Panama Canals.

The families of the Renkenberger Branch of Michael Esterly's descendents are distributed in Ohio, Pennsylvania, Indiana, Oklahoma and Nebraska.

The ESTERLY Pioneers and Their Contemporaries

NOTES ON THE JOHN ESTERLY BRANCH ... OF THE ...

MICHAEL AND CATHERINE ESTERLY FAMILY



Offering a brief account of this, my grandfather's family, I recall significant stages and experiences in my life from early childhood to mature manhood.

A long period in John Esterly's life does not appear in records or traditions. He preserved the characteristics of his Teuton sire. He likewise was sedate but not austere. He took pleasure in conversation with his German friends and neighbors. He remained steadily the son of his Quietist father and followed his pattern of order and regularity in farm affairs. He was a man of average height and build and maintained his vigor far into life. The work he had in hand never seemed to push him. He too divided the day in accord with his father's philosophy of labor, reflection and rest. The members of his household gave devoted service to his wishes and in later years one of his daughters read daily his indicated scriptural or sermonized selections. His family was well ordered, dignified and social.

I can state only tentatively the time when he took over the farm after his brother George left his father's house. Very probably it was about the year of his majority. After the marriage of his sister Anna Maria in 1827 and the death of his mother in 1831, his father, Michael, took his place at son John's table, which event this son had anticipated by marriage.

In 1823 John Matzenbach together with his sister Catherine Matzenbach-Scoggins, widow, and her sister, Aunt Polly, and two daughters, Miranda and Maria Scoggins, left Hagerstown, Maryland and came to Columbiana. In the same year, 1823, he purchased a good farm of 99 acres adjoining the present north corporation line of this village. When barely seventeen years of age, Miranda Scoggins became the wife of John Esterly. The officiating clergyman was Rev. Mahnesmith who lived within a short distance of her mother's home. This worthy man was a missionary sent out by the German Reformed Church and began Catechetical instruction in the first tavern built in Columbiana. He was instrumental in getting the School and Meeting House Society's log building erected in 1815 on the present site of Grace Reformed Church. This undenominational movement appealed to Michael Esterly and he contributed to it in money, supplies and work of men and teams.

Rev. Mahnesmith served this community in ministerial capacity until 1830. I am of the opinion that he officiated at the marriage of all of Michael's children.

Grandmother Esterly's father was of English descent. Her physical traits and mental and social characteristics, as I recall them, were English rather than German. She was a home executive of surpassing ability. Her mind was keen and alert and as her family widened her care and direction in all household matters kept equal pace with increasing tact and ability.

Twelve children were born to John and Miranda Scoggins Esterly, three sons and nine daughters. Of these ten reached the age of majority.

The ESTERLY Pioneers and Their Contemporaries

John Esterly took over his father's farm soon after 1831. This year was the beginning of the most prosperous era of his century. Europe demanded millions of dollars of our exports but sold us only in terms of thousands. Land values rose and prices of farm products kept pace. Shortly now Jackson became President, Congress refused to re-charter the Bank of the United States, the surplus of coin was distributed among the States of the Union. State Banks were now organized under various degrees of securities and charters. In 1837 the worst depression and financial panic comparatively speaking, settled over the country.

When Michael Esterly gave over his farm to his son John he built a small four room house on the same terrace and there carried on his business of loans among his neighbors. It is generally known in this branch of the family that he prospered but to what extent he succeeded in the long run is not a part of this theme. One impression reaches us: "Grandfather lost considerable money by loaning gold and getting paid in State Bank paper." In 1836 he divided his landed estate among four of his children.

Jacob had received his portion in land in 1830, and several small tracts had been sold even before that date. In 1843 at the ripened age of 81 years he put aside the burdens of a strenuous and puissant life. His remains were laid near those of Catherine his wife in the Esterly Burial Ground.

In 1831 legislative acts were passed making obligatory free public school education throughout the State where population warranted it. Previous efforts to this effect had been blocked by strong opposition of influential Virginian sentiment for private schools, but when the movement for canals became general, the Western Reserve and numerous newly elected counties raised their opposition to canals, unless the public schools issue was also favored. And so this compromise came as a long deferred provision of the Ordinance of 1787.

In the following year Cherry Fork District No. 1 of Fairfield Township opened its new frame building to an auspicious day. Five years later my mother as a child was a pupil in this institution. Here she learned her alphabet, two alphabets in fact for the teaching was partly in German, partly in English. In spite of limitations she learned to read fluently and well interpret both English and German, and late in life attained high appreciation of good literature in each.

Instruction was then and ever after held to the minimum of legal requirement in subjects taught, in school equipment and in better wages for better teachers.

During the years preceding text book publication, reading was conducted by the use of the German New Testament. Simple arithmetical tuition was in English, I think, for she never mentioned "Dos ein mal eins," which is German for multiplication tables. It is due to her vivid accounts of this pioneer school that I am able to contribute some facts of policy limitations and instruction within its first 20 years of stewardship.

This school building defied the winter severities, as also every requirement of present sanitary measures. Maximum attendance some years rose beyond 50 pupils. The water supply was fetched from the Esterly spring nearby. It was "passed" by officious youngsters in a dipper that usually lasted a school year. The school yard

The ESTERLY Pioneers and Their Contemporaries

was less than a measured acre but the play grounds were limited to such parts of Gilbert's woods and fields and ponds as could safely be explored before the final dong of the noon bell sounding retreat to books. The games were rough and tumble, invigorating, oftentimes harsh but all furnishing pulmonary purification that offset the ominous dangers of that old gourd dipper. When winter closed the Beaver Dahm and covered the ground with snow, discreet youngsters took to thick ice while stalwart boys chased rabbits into hollow logs and trees, chopped them out and exhibited them in glee, gruesome with dripping blood.

Family dinner baskets carried substantial loads of good food, gulping of which began at 10:30 a. m. reached its maximum at noon, tapered off perceptibly by 2:30 p. m., and finished on the way home where chores, heavy work of stock feeding and household duties were equitably apportioned among those sturdy winter-defying youths.

It was in this Cherry Fork District that the writer began forty-two years of Public School work which closed with twenty-six years' service, five as Principal and twenty-one as Superintendent of the City Schools of Urbana, Ohio. Throughout that time he took active part in State and National Associations and conventions, and for many years was on the faculty of County Institutes in which service he urged radical change in State School policies that would establish normal colleges under exacting charters.

Among the earliest teachers at Cherry Fork School, though probably not in order, were the following: Michael Hartman, John Young, Thomas Beiler, Oliver Ratzell, Herr Professor Zorn, Andrew Harter, William Cope, William Gilbert, Joseph Kyser, my father, and Newton Way. The outstanding teacher that followed was Aaron Overholt, an exemplary man, good instructor and influential leader in a long life of community service.

My earliest recollection is not even of the best of these teachers but a long-retained image which all impressible four-year-old children treasure ad finem after they are greeted at their first school picnic as distinguished guest with unmistakable welcome, greeted with charm of radiant face and deeper charm of voice and gracious manner supplemented by the soul effect of blue ribbons and white habiliments. The first picnic, first impression of school life and first conative urge to respond to each I owe to Priscilla Zimmerman, although I was never a pupil in Cherry Fork District No. 1.

This school suffered from the composite triple headed dialect known as Pennsylvania Dutch, three parts German, two parts Dutch and one part English, each mutilated in pronunciation, grammar and literary requirements. With its grotesque idioms, it was a most persistent handicap in spite of nearly a century of formal schooling and was not eradicated until English ridicule drove it out by aid of our Centralized schools. And yet—I am delighted with my knowledge of its capabilities to serve with a minimum of vocabulary and schooling the purposes of communication in many of our States and most of the States of Germanic Europe. With this dialect on the tongue of an intelligent traveler he may guide the book-taught tourist in any single language through half of Continental Europe.

I take pleasure in greeting my old, home friends in this makeshift dialect, for it expresses itself admirably in friendly democracy, exuberant hilarity and forceful damnation of modern verdolt narren geschmutz ichkeiten dumfullery.

NOTES ON THE
RUKENBROD BRANCH
.. OF THE ..

MICHAEL AND CATHERINE ESTERLY FAMILY



WID the Rukenbrod family come with ours on the voyage of 1804? I sought the answer to this question in the County Recorder's office, Butler, Pa., and there among the 376 signatures of men and women who in 1814 were signers of the transfer of the Harmony Society Estate, I found the names of Christina and Margaretha Rukenbrodin, the only persons of this family name. The terminal syllable "in" indicates in German that they were, previous to 1807, when celibacy was enjoined upon the Society, wives of Rukenbrod husbands.

Evidently the Rukenbrod husbands had died previous to this date.

In the brief chronicles of Columbiana we may read: "In 1822 Jonathan Rukenbrod erected a cabin about one block north of the Public Square and on the east side of Main Street."

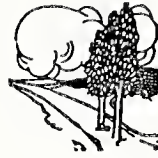
The tradition remains in the John Esterly branch that the Rukenbrods came with our emigrants July 4, 1804. The fact of their coming with our family is not fully confirmed but greatly strengthened by the circumstances noted above. I have pondered long over the relationship of this isolated Jonathan Rukenbrod. Was he the father of John Jonathan, and a man of Michael's age? Were the Rukenbrod husbands of Rapp's Society his brothers?

The family records of Charles H. Rukenbrod of East Palestine, Ohio, show that John Jonathan Rukenbrod was born, according to his own writing, in 1805. In 1827 he married Anna Maria Esterly, aged 20 years. They lived probably nine years on a farm in the neighborhood of North Lima. They were the parents of five children, Catherine, Mary Ann, Lydia, Caroline and J. Jonathan, Jr. Three of the children were born in their first home. In 1836 Michael Esterly conveyed to his daughter and her husband the north half of the southeast quarter of Section No. 5 and the family took possession of it and moved there. The location of this farm and the farm house thereon is indicated on the accompanying pioneer map. The family lived happily here and prospered for a brief period of four years—and here Caroline and J. Jonathan Jr. were born, the latter in 1839. In 1840 the father died from the effects of typhoid fever. In the anguish of her bereavement his devoted wife followed him in death in 1843. Her remains are interred in the Esterly Burial Ground. The children's ages at this time range from that of Catherine, 11 years, to that of J. Jonathan Jr., aged one year. Fostering care for these orphans came as a matter of fraternal love. Family ties were strong and duty imperative on the part of David Rukenbrod and Jacob Esterly. In the case of the latter his own household included seven children from four to nineteen years of age. In the distribution of these orphan children Jacob and Barbara Esterly reared Catherine and Mary Ann and Lydia. David Rukenbrod and his wife reared Caroline and J. Jonathan, Jr. About 1854 Catherine was married to David Strohaker. They purchased the Rukenbrod

The ESTERLY Pioneers and Their Contemporaries

farm. About 1866 the farm buildings were removed to an easy terrace facing the present Columbiana-Leetonia highway at the intersection of this road and our pioneer Trace.

It may be of interest to record here that David Strohaker left the Harmony Society and his father, Christian Strohaker, one of the Signatories of the Society.





HECKMAN
BINDERY INC.



SEPT 97

Bound-To-Please® N. MANCHESTER,
INDIANA 46962

